

sensitivity to the visual experience.

The majority of Alternatives 2A (Preferred), 4D (Preferred), and 4E plus a portion of Alternative 2C are on new alignment. West of the existing US 17 alignment, the new bypasses will largely be screened from view by stretches of forest. Visual quality for travelers on these alternatives would be altered when compared to the visual environment along portions of the developed existing US 17 roadway. Consistent with other rural portions of the existing US 17 corridor, the new bypasses will pass largely through undeveloped lands: crop fields, forest, and wetlands. Views of preserved homes in historic communities will be lost to motorists using the bypasses.

Widening along the existing alignment in Alternatives 2C or 3 (Preferred) will remove some structures currently lining the roadway; however, it will not have a major impact on the viewshed from the route. The width of right-of-way and scale of paved areas will be noticeably increased, changing the appearance of the corridor for residents viewing the highway.

For some residents along Fourth Street / White Oak River Road (SR 1331), White Oak River Road (SR 1116), Riggs Town Road (SR1112), Eight Street (NC 58), Goshen Road (SR 1337), Oak Grove Road (SR 1121), Wise Fork Road (SR 1002), and Simmons Loop Road (SR 1330), the proximity of the new bypasses will have a negative impact on the serenity of their existing rural homes. For residents within communities along existing US 17, less traffic will travel along the existing roadway; however, there will be minimal impacts to the viewshed. Western bypasses of Maysville and Pollocksville will be largely screened from the view of most residents due to existing vegetation.

Measures incorporated into the project that minimize visual impacts include avoiding dense residential areas, minimizing cut and fill slopes by following existing groundlines where possible, and implementing a landscaping plan for areas within the roadway right of way. The landscaping plan would be designed to integrate landscaping into the project design to promote visual continuity and to blend it into the natural landscape as much as possible. Future development adjacent to the proposed roadway could implement measures to reduce visual impacts such as buffer areas and screening landscaping.

It is the policy of NCDOT to incorporate aesthetic features into the roadway design. The NCDOT will attempt to minimize vegetation losses throughout the roadway design process to create an aesthetically pleasing and functional roadway that minimizes visual impacts.

Short-term visual impacts during construction are likely to occur, more noticeably for segments along the existing US 17 route. Visual impacts during construction would affect a greater number of people for a longer period of time under Alternative 2C or 3 (Preferred). Construction would take longer because traffic flow would still need to be maintained along the existing